

Chapel of the Cross
309 East Franklin Street
Chapel Hill
Orange County
North Carolina

HABS No. NC-195

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An addendum to
7 sheets

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

CHAPEL OF THE CROSS

An addendum to
7 sheets

Address: 309 East Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, Orange
County, North Carolina.

Present Owner: Episcopal Church.

Present Occupant: Parish of the Chapel of the Cross.

Present Use: Chapel.

Brief Statement
of Significance: Typical of early Gothic Revival churches in the
United States, some decorative details being faithful to the spirit of European Gothic. It was one-time believed that the building was designed by Richard Upjohn.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Physical History

- A. Original and subsequent owners: Property bought from the University of North Carolina [from report at convention of 1842 by Professor William Mercer Green, Chaplain of the University and Professor of Belles Lettres]. Owned by Episcopal Church since then.
- B. Date of erection: 1843-1846.
- C. Architect: Unknown. Thought for many years that Richard Upjohn designed the building, as he did Christ Church in Raleigh. Robert Upjohn, great-nephew of Richard, and a church architect himself said that Upjohn may have given the parish a set of plans without charge as he frequently did. Archibald Henderson, in his published essay on the Church of the Atonement and the Chapel of the Cross (see Part I-II) feels that the design of the church was derived from a design in "Essay on Gothic Architecture, with various plans and drawings for the churches, designed chiefly for the use of the clergy," by John Henry Hopkins, D.D., Bishop of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 1836. (Designs nos. 29, 30, and 31 on Plates XI and XII).
- D. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known. However, if the chapel design was based on those in Bishop Hopkins' book, the drawings in that book may have been the only ones

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used in the construction.

- E. Sources of information: Federal Writers' Project, North Carolina: A Guide to the Old North State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939).

Henderson, Archibald, "The Church of the Antoneement and the Chapel of the Cross at Chapel Hill, North Carolina," Story and Pageant (Hartford, Connecticut: Church Missions Publishing Company, June-August 1938).

Johnston, Frances Benjamin and Waterman, Thomas Tileston, The Early Architecture of North Carolina, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The inside of the chapel is considerably plainer than the outside and rather inconsistent stylistically, suggesting that the inside design was left more or less to the talents and taste of local craftsmen; i.e., the ceiling is plain, unfinished, random-width boards and the gallery is supported by Doric columns, not Gothic.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent, having been well-maintained and now in process of restoration.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: 42'-4" (facing north) x 62'-7-1/2' plus or minus.
2. Foundations: Brick, now being replaced for greater structural stability.
3. Wall construction: Red brick, bearing walls and piers (piers support part of tower). Battlement has brick coping.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main door (to north) has shallow-arched opening, double doors with arched panels; stone label, ogee-arch shape with crockets and finial. Present door to south is modern. Two doors to south now connect with later parish hall to south.

- b. Windows: Double-lancet, pointed-arch windows, with brick labels, carved wood mullions; leaded, diamond, amber panes; all fixed excepting horizontal, pivoting casements in lower part of each window and double-hung sash in tower window.
 - c. Louvers (bell tower): Square-head openings, square, brick labels, paired lancets with wood mullions and wood slats.
5. Roof:
- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with slate covering.
 - b. Framing: Queen post trusses, members fastened with wood pegs, iron spikes, and iron straps.
- C. Technical Description of Interior
- 1. Floor plan: Originally only a nave and tower with rear gallery. The present chancel was added later.
 - 2. Stairway to gallery: Rises under gallery. 1/4 turn at foot, boarded baluster.
 - 3. Gallery: Paneled baluster and is supported by two, solid pine columns of Doric design.
 - 4. Flooring: Modern oak on nave floor. Gallery has unfinished pine boards.
 - 5. Wall finish: Sandy plaster on walls and sills is modern with metal corner beads.
 - 6. Ceiling finish: Regular-width pine boards, unfinished.
 - 7. Doorways and doors: Square-head opening between tower-entry and nave has double, two-leaf doors, with two panels per leaf and smaller corresponding panels above the door.
 - 8. Trim: Plain pine boards around doors.
 - 9. Hardware: Simple iron latches and hinges.
 - 10. Lighting: Modern electric; no evidence of earlier type.
 - 11. Heating: Modern radiators between windows.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: On campus of University of North Carolina. Faces north to Franklin Street.
2. Walks: Modern blacktop.
3. Landscaping: Informal lawn with shade trees and shrubs.

Prepared by Robert E. Cooper, Architect
National Park Service
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